

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF JOINT EC STATEMENT ON ITEM 5 TO
BE DELIVERED THIS AFTERNOON BY EC REP SLATER. BEGIN
TEXT:

1. ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, I
WOULD LIKE TO INDICATE TO OUR COLLEAGUES THE SPIRIT
IN WHICH WE APPROACH THE CENTROL POINT OF THIS SESSION
OF THE COMMITTEE, NAMELY THE PROPOSED OVERALL INTE-
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GRATED PROGRAMME.

2. THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT HAS PLACED US ALL IN ITS DEBT BY THE QUALITY OF SEVERAL OF THE PAPERS IT HAS PREPARED. IN THE PAST, WE HAVE SOMETIMES HAD REASON TO REGRET A CERTAIN ONE-SIDENESS. IN THESE PAPERS THE DIFFICULTIES OF BOTH CONSUMER AND PRODUCER COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN SET OUT FAIRLY: THE DIFFICULTIES HAVE NOT BEEN GLOSSED OVER, NOR THE FACT THAT MANY PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN RAISED TO WHICH ANSWERS HAVE STILL TO BE FOUND. THE RESULT IS A SERIES OF IMAGINATIVELY AND PERSUASIVELY WRITTEN PAPERS, WHICH MUST SURELY OWE MUCH TO THE OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL IN THIS FIELD.

3. THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORIAN, MAITLAND, USED TO SAY THAT ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTION IS HALF THE BATTLE. THE QUESTION POSED BY THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMME IS NOT A NEW ONE: IT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL ONE OF HOW THE WORLD COMMUNITY IS TO CONDUCT ITS COMMODITY TRADE. ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, I WISH TO SAY THAT WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A FRESH LOOK AT THE WHOLE PROBLEM; WE BELIEVE THAT THE CONCEPT OF COMPREHENSIVENESS OPENS NEW DOORS IN THE COMMODITIES DEBATE, AND CAN BE MADE RESPONSIVE TO THE INTERESTS OF PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS ALIKE.

4. THE DIFFICULTY IN 1975 IS THAT THIS QUESTION IS POSED IN A CONTEXT OF GRAVE ECONOMIC INSTABILITY, AND IN A PERSPECTIVE FROM WHICH ONLY THE FOOLHARDY WOULD EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF A WORLD RECESSION. IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF DOCUMENT TD/B/C.1/166, THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT UNDERLINES:
"A SERIOUS SLOWDOWN IS OCCURRING IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES, ACCOMPANIED BY UNABATED INFLATION AND RADICAL CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL PAYMENTS SITUATION," WHILE THE SECOND PARAGRAPH STATES THAT:
"FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, THE WORLD IS WITHOUT ADEQUATE RESERVE STOCKS OF ESSENTIAL
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FOODS AND SEVERAL INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS."

5. EVERY REPRESENTATIVE IN THIS ROOM IS AWARE THAT THIS COMMITTEE MEETS IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE CHANGED PROFOUNDLY SINCE ITS LAST SESSION. THE ABOUT-RISE IN THE PRICE OF OIL PRODUCTS HAS INCREASED BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES FOR MANY COUNTRIES, NOT LEAST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. OTHER PRIMARY COMMODITIES

HAVE UNDERGONE MAJOR FLUCTUATIONS. THESE IN TURN HAVE FED THE SPIRAL OF WORLD INFLATION. IT CAN SCARE-LQ BE OVEREMPHASIZED THAT INTERNATIONAL MONETARY DIS-ORDER RENDERS DIFFICULT ORDER IN THE FILED OF INTER-NATIONALLY TRADED COMMODITIES.

6. IT IS RESPONSIBLE TO ARGUE THAT AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC STORM, THE ENERGIES OF GOVERNMENTS MUST BE DEVOTED TO IMMEDIATE, REMEDIAL MEASURES, BEFORE THEY ARE DEVOTED TO LONG TERM STRUCTURAL REFORM. THIS CONSIDERATION MUST TEMPER OUR EXPECTATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH DURABLE SOLUTIONS CAN BE ACHIEVED WHEN THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE SITUATION ARE IN SUCH FLUX.

7. THOUGH THIS LAST CONSIDERATION IS NO MORE THAN COMMON SENSE, THE COMMUNITY IS ALSO KEENLY AWARE OF HOW THE PROBLEM APPEARS TO MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THIS ARISES IN PART FROM THE UNCTAD CONTEXT ITSELF. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAVE SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE RESULTS IN THE COMMODITIES FIELD ANALAGOUS TO THE RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE FIELD OF MANUFACTURES THROUGH GENERALIZED PREFERENCES. WE UNDERSTAND THE ASPIRATIONS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND ARE PREPARED TO SEEK, TOGETHER WITH THEM, FOR SOLUTIONS TO THEIR PROBLEMS, ON THE BASIS OF INTER-DEPENDENCE.

8. THE COMMUNITY, FOR ITS PART, COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY ONE-SIDED VERSION OF THE THING. WHILE THE CRISIS IS BEARING PARTICULARLY HEAVILY ON SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, NONE ESCAPE ITS EFFECTS. IT IS EVIDENT THAT A COMMUNITY WHICH FAILED IN ECONOMIC GROWTH WOULD BE UNABLE TO CARRY THROUGH THE TRADE AND AID POLICIES

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TO BENEFIT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH OTHERWISE IT WOULD HAVE SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE. THE CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH MUST BE TO IDENTIFY THE COMMON INTEREST IN THE SITUATION. AT THE LAST SESSION OF THE BOARD THE COMMUNITY SPOKESMAN UNDERLINED THIS POINT AS FOLLOWS."

"PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT ENTIRELY UN-

FAVOURABLE. THE CONCERN OF THE CONSUMING COUNTRIES FOR STABILITY OF SUPPLY IS PARALLELED BY THE CONCERN OF THE PRODUCER COUNTRIES FOR STABILITY OF EXPORT EARNINGS. BOTH SHARE AN INTEREST IN THE RATIONAL USE OF NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THERE IS GREATER AWARENESS OF THE CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS, I WOULD FEEL THAT THIS MIGHT BE OUR GREATEST HOPE

OF SUCCSS."

9. MAY WE PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AT THAT PHRASE, "GREATER AWARENESS OF CONVERGING INTERSTS?" THIS COMMODITIES COMMITTEE HAS AN ESTABLISHED, AND HONORABLE, TRADITION OF BRINGING TECHNICAL EXPRTISE TO BEAR ON COMMON PROBLEMS, AND PROCDING BY WAY OF CONSENSUS. IT WOULD BE NO SERVIE TO THE COMMON INTERST TO SLOGANIZE DISCUSSIONS OF WHAT ARE GENGUINELY COMPLEX AND DIFFUCULT MATTERS. THESE PROBLEMS WILL REMAIN INPERVIOUS TO RESOLUTIONS WHICH REMAIN UNIMPLMENTED BECAUSE THEY DO NOT RELFECT A GENUINE CONSENSUS.

10. WHERE CAN WE FIND THE BASIS FOR THEAT CONSENSUS IN RESPECT FIRST OF PRINCIPLS AND OBJECTIVES, SECONDLY IN RESPECT OF PROACTICAL APPLICATIONS? THE COMMUNITY CONSIDERS THAT WE SHOLD FIRST SEE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE PRINCIPLES AND OBJECIVES SET OUT BY THE SECRE- TARIAT IN DOCUMENT 166, AS SUMMARIZED IN PARA 10. THEREOF. TO THE EIGHT POINTS LISTED THERE, WE WOULD WISH TO ADD A FURTHER TWO. WE WOULD SUMMARIZE OUR CONCEPT OF THE TEN PONINTS AS FOLLOWS:
(Q) THE BASIS CONCEPT OF SEEKING SIMULTANEOUSLY SOLUIONS FOR THE PROBLEMS RELATING TO ANUMBER OF COMMODITIES;
(W) DUE ACCOUNT OF THE INTERESTS OF BOTH EXPORT- UNCLASSIFIED

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INT AND IMPORTING COUNTRIES;
(3) COOPERATIVE ACTION IN PRODUCER-CONSUMER AR- RANGEMENTS SHOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE INTERESTS OF ALL UNCTAD MEMBER STATES;
(4) ELIMINATION OF EXCESSIVE FLUCTUATIONS OF COMMODITY PRICES HROUGH APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS;

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(5) COMMODITY PRICES SHOULD BE EQUITABLE,
REMUNERATION AND AT ALLEVEL WHICH WILL
ENCOURAGE LONG-TERM EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN PRO-
DUCTION AND CONSUMPTION;

(6) DIVERSIFICATION AND THE PROCESSNG OF COMODITIES IN DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED;

(7) THE SHARED INTEREST OF BOTH EXPORTERS AND
IMPORTERS SHOULD BE REFLECTEDIN IMPROVED MARKETING AND
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DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS;

(8) IN RESPECT OF ACCESS, WE WOULD WISH TO RETAIN
THE BALANCED FORMULATION ALREADY AGREED IN
RESOLUTION 73(X), ON PRICING POLICY AND LIBERALIZATION
OF TRADE.

TO THESE WE THEN WOULD ADD:

(9) SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE
LEAST DEVELOPED AMONG THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:

(10) THE NEED TO RESPECT THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF
COMMODITY PRODUCTION AND TRADING IN PRODUCING

AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES.

11. WHEN WE COME TO THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION, THE MAIN ISSUE IS TO AGREE ON WHAT IS POSSIBLE IN TERMS OF THE RANGE OF COMMODITIES CONCERNING WHICH THERE CAN FEASIBLY BE "SIMULTANEOUS AND URGENT" NEGOTIATIONS, IN A PROGRAMME "CONCEIVED AS AN INTEGRAL WHOLE AND NEGOTIATED AS SUCH" WITH A VIEW TO LONG TERM SOLUTIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE WERE ENCOURAGED BOTH BY THE STATEMENT WHICH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MADE AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR SESSION, AND BY THE STATEMENT REFLECTING THE VIEWS OF THE GROUP OF "77" MADE BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA. THESE STATEMENTS BROUGHT OUT CLEARLY WHAT AN ATTENTIVE READING OF THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT PAPERS HAD ALREADY SHOWN, NAMELY THAT THE INTEGRATED APPROACH IS NOT A FINALISED THING BUT RATHER A FLEXIBLE APPROACH WHICH RECOGNIZES THE DIFFERENTIATED FACTORS AFFECTING EACH COMMODITY.

12. WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES THE COMMUNITY FOR ITS PART HAS IN MIND? IF YOU LOOK AT PAGE 7 OF DOCUMENT 166 YOU WILL SEE THAT THE FIRST GROUP OF COMMODITIES ARE THE STAPLE FOOD CEREALS AND SUGAR. IN RESPECT OF CEREALS THE WORLD FOOD CRISIS HAS ALREADY RESULTED IN A WIDE CONSENSUS, AS REFLECTED IN THE RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, IN FAVOUR OF COORDINATING NATIONAL STOCKING POLICIES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, WITH THE AIM OF MAINTAINING CEREAL STOCKS AT LEVELS AT LEAST SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES TO PREVENT GRAVE FOOD SHORTAGES IN THE EVENT OF HARVEST FAILURE OR NATURAL CATASTROPHE. THIS IS UNCLASSIFIED

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INVOLVES ACTION BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY AFFECTING THE CEREALS SECTOR. FOR ITS PART, THE COMMUNITY IS WILLING TO GO FURTHER, AND TO SAY THAT IT IS READY TO NEGOTIATE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON THE FIRST FOUR COMMODITIES LISTED, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE STOCK-PILING ARRANGEMENTS WHERE APPROPRIATE. THE COMMUNITY IS READY TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOR THESE INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY AGREEMENTS IN THE APPROPRIATE BODIES WITHOUT DELAY.

13. WHAT HAS JUST BEEN SAID REPRESENTS NO SMALL UNDERTAKING. AT THE SAME TIME, DESPITE THEIR ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE AS IMPORTS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF RICE AND SUGAR, THE COMMODITIES CONCERNED ARE NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT EXPORT EARNER FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. SO WE MUST BE PREPARED TO GO FURTHER.

14. THE NEXT SECTOR IN THE LIST PREPARED BY THE UNCTAD

SECRETARIAT COVERS TROPICAL PRODUCTS. THE MAIN EXPORT EARNERS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HERE ARE COFFEE AND COCOA. FOR THE BUTURE OF BOTH COMMODITIES, 1975 IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT YEAR, WITH BASIC RE-NEGOTIATION OF THE 1968 INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT, AND RENEWAL OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL COCOA AGREEMENT. IN RESPECT OF TEA, THE INTENSIVE CONSULTATION LAST JUNE REACHED CONSENSUS THAT THE F.A.O. INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP SHOULD EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF A "MULTI-DIMENTIAL" ARRANGEMENT. IT IS ON THE SUCCESS OF THESE EFFORTS THAT MUST DEPEND ANY OVERALL APPROACH TO THE TROPICAL PRODUCTS SECTOR. IN THIS CONTEXT THE COMMUNITY IS READY TO CONSIDER, IN RESPECT OF PROCESSED AGRICULTURLA PRODUCTS, THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER BENEFITING DEVELOPING PRODUCER COUNTRIES UNDER ITS SCHEME OF GENERALIZED PREFERENCES.

15. THE COMMUNITY HAS DOUBTS ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF BEGINNING SIMULTANEOUS NEGOTIATIONS IN 1975 ALSO ON THE TWELVE OTHER COMMODITIES PROPOSED BY THE UNCTAD SECRETARIAT. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD NOT WISH TO ENLARGE BOTH DEVELOPING EXISTING AGREEMENTS, (SUCH AS THAT ON TIN) AND REACHING NEW ONES. THE INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS USEFULLY UNCLASSIFIED

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IDENTIFIED THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED WITH SEVERAL OF THESE COMMODITIES. BUT IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE TO TRY TO GET SUCH EXPERT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT MANPOWER RESOURCES AS DEVELOPING--AND DEVELOPED--COUNTRIES POSSESS, AND SUCH INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY AS THEY SHARE, TO UNDERTAKE TOO MUCH AT TONE TIME. WE BELIVE THAT REALISM ON THS SCORE IS GOOD SERVICE TO THE CAUSE OF DEVELOPMENT. BECAUSE THE COMMUNITY IS COMMITTED TO THAT CAUSE IT HAS TO BE EQUALLY FRANK ABOUT THE TIME SACLE, IF WE REALLY WANT T GET RESULTS.

16. DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE UNTAC SECRETARIAT, SOME OF THE KEY DOCUMENTS ON THE AGENDA DID NOT REACH NATIONAL CAPITALS UNTIL, IN SOME CASES, ONLY A FEW DAYS BEFORE THIS MEETING BEGAN. BECAUSE THE SECRETARIAT PAPERS TOUCH SO MANY ISSUES AND INTERESTS, THEY HAVE TO BE EXAMINED BY SEVERAL MINISTRIES IN EACH NATIONAL CAPITAL, AND THEN IN BRUSSELS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. IT IS SIMPLY NOT FEASIBLE TO EXPECT HARD PRESSED GOVERNMENT MACHINES TO COME TO FINAL VIEWS ON SUCH BIG ISSUES IN SO SHORT A TIME.

17. QUITE APART FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT, AND OTHER IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ALSO

DEALING WITH COMMODITIES WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE END OF THIS SESSION, THIS MEANS THAT TO PRESS FOR FINAL DECISIONS AT THE PRESENT SESSION WOULD ONLY BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. WHAT WE CAN AND MUST DO IS TO SEEK CONSENSUS ON THE BASIC ATTITUDE, AND REPORT THIS TO OUR GOVERNMENTS. THE 6TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE BOARD, MEETING ONLY 10 WORKING DAYS FROM THE END OF THIS COMMITTEE'S SESSION, WILL EVIDENTLY BE TOO SOON FOR GOVERNMENTS TO HAVE DIGESTED THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMODITIES COMMITTEE (EVEN ASSUMING THE REPORT REACHES CAPITALS IN RECORD TIME). THE EARLIEST MOMENT FOR DECISION MAKING CAN THEREFORE ONLY BE AT THE 15TH BOARD, IN AUGUST. AS THE COMMUNITY SPOKESMAN STATED AT THE BOARD'S LAST SESSION:

" AT THAT POINT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THE FOURTH CONFERENCE, WHICH MUST REMAIN THE AP-
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PROPRIATE POLITICAL LAUNCHING PAD, IF IT PROVES POSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF A FRECH APPROACH".

18. FOR THIS TO BE POSSIBLE THE DECISIONS OF THE BOARD WILL NEED TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE PRESENT YEAR, AND THE RESULTS FILTERED THROUGH THE REGIONAL MEETINGS WHICH ARE TO BE CALLED TO PREPARE FOR NAIROBI. EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE NEEDS TO HAVE BEFORE IT "PREA-DIGESTED" DECISION, REQUIRING FINAL APPROVAL AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. IN A SITUATION WHICH IN MANY WAYS IS DARK AND INDEED PERILOUS, IT IS GOOD TO REFLECT A TOUCH OF OPTIMISM. BUT THE TIMETABLE JUST ENVISAGED HAS STILL TO "REACH FIRST BASE". THIS DEPENDS ON OUR ACHIEVING AN INITIAL CONSENSUS HERE DURING THE FEW DAYS WE HAVE AVAILABLE. THE COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES HAVE COME HERE READY TO WORK HARD TO ACHIEVE JUST THIS. END TEXT DALE

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